

BT
302
S56
v.1
GTU
Storage

75



Library of the
Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

No. 13792 Class TM43.75 S559 v.1

Ex Dono Rev. Charles Hitchcock

Date 1933

TM43.75
S559

13792
Bk. 1

Library of the
Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

Gayle
PAMPHLET BIN
Syracuse, N.Y.
Stockton, Calif.

Jesus

Book 1

Bethlehem



no. 13792
class 5

St. Nicholas



© T. S. P. CO.

Story and Pictures By-
J. H. Shonkwiler

BT

302

S56

V. 1

~~IM4375~~

~~S559~~

~~B21~~

good and evil. From this tree you must not eat; for, if you do eat from it, you shall surely die." God did not mean that by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree they should die at once. He wanted them to understand that the taste of this fruit would cause them to know evil as well as good, and that this evil knowledge in time would destroy them.

But the man and woman did not obey God. The spirit of evil, which the Bible calls a serpent, approached the woman and said that God did not want them to eat of the forbidden tree because the taste of its fruit would make them wise.

Should they eat of it, he said, they would have knowledge like that of God Himself. The woman thought it would be fine to be wise like God.

The Spirit of Evil She took of the fruit and ate it. Finding it pleasing to the taste, she gave some to her husband, and he ate of it also.

No doubt they thought that they could do this secretly and not be found out. In this they were greatly mistaken. The knowledge of evil made them wiser, it is true, but they were still far from being as wise as God. Then a feeling they had never before known came over them—a sense of shame. For the first time in their lives they were unhappy. The Bible tells us that when afterward they heard God walking in the garden they hurried away and hid themselves. But God knew what they had done, and, lest their newly gained knowledge lead them also to eat of the tree of life and live forever in their evil state, God sent His angel to drive them out of the garden and told them they should never more re-enter it. God also said that from that time on the earth would yield its fruits for them only after the hardest labor. They, and their children after them, He said, would know pain and sorrow and evil until they return to the earth from which they were taken. "For of dust you were made," God said, "and to dust shall you return."

This may seem to us a terrible punishment for the wrong they had done. But we must remember that God had created them to make perfect the world He had made. He wanted them to be near Him always and to honor and worship Him. To this end He had made them intelligent creatures, with power to think and choose for themselves. Since they had chosen to disobey Him they must now go their own way. Instead of the beautiful garden filled with all the bounty of nature, they could have for their home only the barren land. To all the generations that would come after them they would leave a heritage of toil and sorrow and sin and evil.

The First

But God did not send the man and woman out of Eden hopeless. He cursed the serpent, the spirit of evil, and said that it should crawl in the dirt and eat dirt unto the end of its days. He also promised that among the children of the woman should some time be born One who would overcome evil and restore to mankind that which by disobedience had been lost. This was the first promise of the Saviour, who is called Jesus. And while He was not born until many, many centuries after this time, the good people of the world never ceased to watch and hope for His coming.



*God Promised that among the Children of the Woman Should Some Time
Be Born One Who Would Overcome Evil and Restore to
Mankind That Which Had Been Lost*

THE WICKED SONS OF ADAM



WE have seen how the first man and woman who came into the world disobeyed God. This act of disobedience is called the first sin, and by it Adam and Eve lost not only their home in the beautiful Garden of Eden, but also their fellowship with God, for God no longer came near them or talked with them.

But God did not want man to be without some way of remembering and worshiping Him. He revealed to Adam and his sons how they could make gifts to Him, and, in this way, come near His presence, although they could no longer see nor

*How Man Tried
to Remember and
Worship God*

hear Him. These gifts were called sacrifices, or offerings, and must be of the choicest of man's possessions—the finest of the sheep or cattle, the most perfect of the fruits of the field. They must be burned with fire to show that they no longer belonged to man, but that he had given them to God. So long as he made these offerings God knew that, in his poor way, man was trying to remember and worship Him. But man did not always remember to do this. Sometimes the worshipers even quarreled over the sacrifice. In just a little while we read in the Bible that one of Adam's sons, named Cain, sinned even more grievously than his father before him, for he killed his own brother. For this God punished him by driving him away from his parents, as He had punished Adam by driving him out of Eden.

In this way began sin to spread among men. Adam and Eve lived to a very great age and had many children, who,

in turn, had children born to them, so that, in the course of time, there were great numbers of people in the world. But, sad to say, these people were nearly all very wicked. They murdered and robbed one another and became so evil-minded that at last God said that He was sorry that He had made man.

Only a few here and there among all the descendants of Adam remembered God and tried to keep near Him. These few God blessed abundantly. One was a great and good man named Enoch. God loved Enoch so that He did not permit him to die. The Bible says that Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him. Another good man whom God loved and blessed was Enoch's grandson, whose name was Noah.

Noah Walks with God

Noah came upon the earth in the very worst time of its history. It was in the days of Noah that God said that He was sorry that He had created man, since all man's thoughts were of wickedness and evil. But Noah trusted God, and God came near to him and talked to him. And because he loved the people and knew that God loved them in spite of their wickedness, Noah went out and preached to them and pleaded with them to cease their evil ways. But the people only laughed at him.

Then God told Noah that the end of all flesh had come, for He was going to destroy all living creatures on the earth by a great flood. But Noah, because of his righteousness, was to be saved with all his family. Mankind, somehow, had gone all wrong. The sin of Adam and Eve and the evil blood of Cain had set every man's hand against his neighbor. There was nothing to do but wipe out the whole race and begin over again. Perhaps, with a good man like Noah to start repeopling the earth, the result would be better.

God told Noah how to build a great ship in which he and his family would be saved. And though the people ridiculed him for building a ship when there was no water in which to



*So Long as He Made Those Offerings God Knew that in His Poor Way Man
Was Trying to Remember and Worship Him*

float it, Noah set to work to do as God had told him. For a hundred and twenty years he toiled at his ship and pleaded with the people. The people would not listen, but as the years passed the ship took shape, and, when at last it was done, it

was almost as large as one of the great ocean

The Building liners of our own times.

of the Ark

Into this ship, at God's command, Noah gathered by pairs of all the animals that God had created. Two of every kind he selected—a male and a female. Of those good for food he took seven pairs of each kind. He also stored food in the ship, or ark, as it was called, sufficient to last the people and animals within until the flood should be past.

At the end of a hundred and twenty years the flood came as God had said it would. For five months the ark, with its strange cargo of animals and people, floated upon an endless ocean waste. Every living creature upon the land perished and the earth was left desolate.

Noah's first act after the water had gone down so that he and his family could come out again upon the land was to build an altar and offer sacrifice. This act of

God's Covenant
with Noah

devotion was pleasing to God, and as the smoke of the offering ascended He spoke to Noah and made a covenant with him that He would not

again destroy man as He had done. God said that He had looked upon man's heart and knew that his thoughts were naturally evil. God also said that in the future He would always remember this. Because of it He would overlook man's sins, God said, until that time when the promised One—that is, the Saviour—should come and redeem that which man had lost.

This period in which man was not to be judged was to become known in history as the Patriarchal Dispensation. In it there would be a time when God would raise up a nation of His own people whom He would instruct in His laws and

teach to walk in His ways. For the time being all the other peoples in the world would be left to go as they would. God required of them only that they make some effort to govern themselves and abstain from murder. To help man to do

this God gave Noah a law—the first law ever
The First given to man to be by man enforced.

Human Law This law related to the shedding of blood, or murder. God said that if any man shed the blood of another, then by man should his blood be shed. This was a hard law, but there was nothing else to do. If man could not be made to fear God whom he could not see, perhaps he could be made to fear the power of his fellow-man, who would surely punish him when he committed a crime. This was to be a law for all the people. But to His chosen people, whom God would raise up afterward, He would teach, in addition, a higher law of faith and trust in Himself, which would, in time, prepare the world for the coming of the promised Redeemer.

Noah's three sons were Ham, Shem and Japheth. Ham greatly offended his father and caused the old patriarch to utter a curse upon Ham's son, Canaan, and at the same time a blessing upon Shem and Japheth. Time has proven this to be one of the most remarkable of all the ancient prophecies.

In the course of his blessing Noah said: "Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem. . . . God enlarge Japheth and let him dwell
in the tents of Shem." This was interpreted to

In the Tents mean that unto the children of Shem should be
of Shem given the *keeping of the worship of Jehovah God*,
and that unto them, eventually, the promised Saviour would be born. Also, that while the children of Japheth should be widely scattered, they would, in the fullness of time, return to the worship of the God of Shem. Although this prophecy was made many thousands of years ago, we shall see, as the story goes on, how completely it has been fulfilled.

GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE



SINCE God Himself had said that every imagination of man's heart was evil, it would be, perhaps, hoping too much to expect the people after the flood to be any better than those before it. They were not, at heart, but the severity of the law against murder made men hesitate to commit that particular crime.

In the course of time Ham, Shem and Japheth had numerous descendants. First, as wandering tribes, later as migrating nations, they pushed their way into the remotest parts of the earth. North, south, east and west they went.

Very early in history they occupied the lands

The Dispersion about the Mediterranean in western Asia and
of the Peoples northern Africa. Some went eastward into

Asia, some southward into the present country of Arabia. The descendants of Japheth crossed the Great Sea and became the ancestors of the modern European nations and possibly of the aboriginal peoples of America. The children of Shem remained in western Asia and became the forefathers of the Hebrews and kindred races. The discoveries of a branch of modern science which we call archæology seem to verify this ancient Bible story and to prove that from the three sons of Noah all the people in the world to-day are descended.

But, as we have seen, mankind did not seem able to do much better in the new world than in the old. In just a little while, the Bible tells us, they began to do all the wicked things they had done before. Most of them forgot all about God.

Instead of worshiping Him, they began to build temples to idols. Some worshiped the sun and moon. Others worshiped fire, and, as the centuries passed, and men got farther and farther away from the God of Noah and Shem, we read of them throwing their children into the mouths of huge idols that were really nothing more than fiery furnaces. It seemed that no deed was too horrible or wicked or cruel for them to do. This, in short, was the condition of mankind when a great man named Abraham appeared in a place called Ur of the Chaldees.

Abraham was a descendant of Shem, the son of Noah, to whom, you will remember, God had entrusted His worship.

Abraham Because he was so different in thought and character from the people around him, God told Abraham
Obeys God ham to go out of Ur and to a place which He would show him. Abraham obeyed. With all his flocks and herds, for he had great possessions, and with all his servants, he moved westward to the land of Canaan, where he built an altar and worshiped God.

Like Noah and Enoch, Abraham walked with God. He was a man of great faith, and because of this God made a covenant with him. Although Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were at that time nearly ninety years old, and had no children, God told him that He would make him the father of a great nation whose numbers should be as the sands of the sea.

Jacob God kept His promise to Abraham, and in
Inherits the time did make of his descendants one of the
Promise greatest nations that have ever lived on the earth.

Abraham's son was Isaac, and Isaac's sons were Jacob and Esau. Esau was not the right sort of a man to carry out God's purpose for His people, and the inheritance of the promise to Abraham passed to Jacob, who was also called Israel. Jacob's twelve sons became each the head of a tribe, and the descendants of all these tribes together have been known ever since as the children of Israel.



One Prophet Had Said that He Should Be Rejected of Men—a Man of Sorrows and Acquainted with Grief

On and on the centuries rolled. The descendants of Japheth also increased and became the great nations of Europe whose histories you have doubtless read in school. Likewise some of the descendants of Ham became great and powerful. Among them were the Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians. But all these peoples worshiped strange gods in a manner that was both wicked and cruel. It was only in the one branch of the children of Shem, known as the descendants of Abraham, or Israel, that the worship of the true God was known.

For this reason God called the Israelites His chosen people and blessed them abundantly. He sent great and good leaders to instruct them in His laws and to teach them how to live in peace with one another and with Him. Among these leaders were Moses, Joshua, Gideon and Samuel. Each of these in his time walked and talked with God and in turn told the people how their sins could be atoned for or covered up, until the promised Redeemer should come.

Not only did God richly bless His people, but He gave them a land of their own. This land is now called Judea, or Palestine, and its chief city was then, as now, Jerusalem. Here lived the great King David, whose son, Solomon, built a magnificent temple to God. Upon the great altar of this temple daily sacrifices were offered for the sins of the people.

But even God's own people, greatly as He had blessed them, were not safe from sin. The spirit of evil that tempted the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden, and which has put evil into the hearts of mankind ever since, was at work also in Jerusalem and the land of Israel. The worship of Jehovah God became corrupted. The people did things which God's law commanded them not to do. As a result of this disobedience they were sorely punished. Warlike nations to the east and west of them

came with their armies, burned Jerusalem and the temple and left the cities of Israel in ruins. But still God did not desert them. To the remnant that still clung to Him, He sent great prophets, who, as the time for the Saviour to come drew near, told the people more and more about the One whose coming had been promised so long ago.

Nor was it alone in Israel that the Saviour's coming was awaited. The world outside of Judea had become about as wicked as it could be. Wars of conquest went on continually. No man's life or property was safe. People were forever being carried away from their own countries into captivity and slavery. Poverty and misery were everywhere. The strong took all and the weak were left with nothing. Their gods had failed them. Everything had gone wrong. But even among these heathen peoples there were scattered and dim traditions of a promise that some time, somewhere, One would be born into the world who would set things right.

In a like manner things had become worse and worse with the Jews, as God's people were now called. But they did not lose hope. More and more they watched and waited for the coming of that King of whom their prophets had said that He should rule the whole world, and that of His kingdom there should be no end.

There were many of these prophets who lived at different times, and all of them told of this promised King. But all did not tell the same things about Him. One said that He

The should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sor-
Prophets rows and acquainted with grief; that He should be pierced for our sins and crushed for our iniquities.

Another had told where He should be born and another had described the times in which He should come. One of them, Isaiah, who lived about five hundred years before Jesus was born, wrote a description of His life and of the work that He should do that reads as if it were written after His coming

instead of centuries before. You should find this chapter in your Bible and read it. It is the fifty-third chapter of the Book of Isaiah.

With all these wonderful prophecies concerning the Saviour, or Messiah, as He is also called, it is not strange that the people of Israel were stedfastly awaiting the sign of His coming. Even this sign had been foretold to them. It was, that just before He should come, a great prophet would appear and tell the people to prepare for the coming of the great King.

Even a description of this prophet had been given to the people. He was to be like the great prophet Elijah, who had lived centuries before in the time of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. Elijah was a rough-looking man, who dressed in poor clothes, and wore a leathern girdle. As he had in his day fearlessly called the king and the people to righteousness, even so it was believed that one like unto Elijah would appear before the coming of the Messiah, to prepare His way.

But, in spite of all these things, the people of Israel were not prepared for the coming of their Messiah, and did not know Him when at last He came. He was so entirely different from what they expected Him to be that they rejected Him. Even this, also, their ancient prophets had foretold.



"Hail, Mary, Beloved of God"

NAZARETH



FOR many centuries before Jesus was born the Jews had not been rulers of the land which God had given them. Heedless always of God's warning that to disobey Him would bring upon them sorrow and suffering, they had again and again broken His laws. One of the laws they had broken forbade them to have anything to do with the idol-worshipping peoples around them. Although the Jews knew that they had nothing in common with these nations, yet they went out among them and even worshiped their gods. This mixing in bad company had its natural result. Quarrels arose. Too late the misguided

Jews repented of their folly, and from quarreling with their neighbors it was but a matter of time until conquering armies overran Israel, robbed and plundered the people and laid their cities in blackened ruins. Thousands were carried away into captivity, and those who remained were for centuries little better than slaves to their foreign masters. Even the descendants of David, their great king, were poor, and had to work at whatever they could find to do to earn a living. One of these was a carpenter named Joseph, who lived in a little town called Nazareth. He had suffered with the rest of the people, and, like them, was watching and waiting for the coming of the great King. Joseph had all the more reason for this because the prophets had foretold that this King, when He should come, would be among David's descendants. Perhaps He might be one of Joseph's own family. Who could tell?

No doubt Joseph, too, held the common belief that with the coming of this King all would be well. The throne of David would be set up again and the Messiah be crowned upon it. With invincible armies He would conquer the world and rule it. They would repay the oppression and wrongs they had suffered with the sword. The tribute that had been taken from them by the sword they would in like manner retake, in turn, and as God had fought with Moses and their great leaders in the olden time, they believed that He would fight with the Messiah when He should come.

For gradually the idea had become fixed among the Jews, as God's people were now called, that the Messiah, when He should come, would be an earthly king, and rule the whole world. Had not their rabbis for centuries been telling them so? And had not God Himself called them His own people? Besides, that was the kind of a king they wanted Him to be; and, usually, it is not difficult for people to make themselves believe what they want to believe. They had borne so much from their oppressors that it was only natural that they should cherish the hope of revenge.

But their Messiah was not to be that kind of a king. His kingdom was to be in the hearts and souls of men, and His subjects would be the good people of all the nations of the world. For, you must remember that *The Saviour Promised to All Mankind* His coming was not promised to the Jews alone, but to all mankind. God's chosen people were to be only the keepers of the ancient covenants with Adam, Noah, Moses and Abraham. But the Jews, apparently, had forgotten this, and, somehow, had come to believe that the promise was only to them.

The time was now at hand when, as their prophets had foretold, the Messiah should come. Their rabbis, or teachers, who constantly studied the law were saying so, and the people were watching for the strange and wonderful things which it

was believed would happen at the time of His birth. Indeed, strange things did happen then, but not in the way the rabbis had led the people to expect.

The first of these things occurred to a priest named Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth. They were an old couple who had no children, although they had often prayed to God to send them a son who would take away the reproach from his parents, for the Jews of that day believed it to be a mark of God's disfavor to be without children.

One day Zacharias was to burn incense in the Holy Place in the temple. This was one of the most sacred parts of the temple ceremonies, one in which the officiating priest had to approach almost to the very presence of the Holy of Holies. It was a high honor that could come to a Jewish priest but once in a lifetime, and, like all the other important duties of the temple, was awarded by lot. Zacharias had grown old and gray in the temple service, but not until this day had the lot fallen upon him to burn incense upon the golden altar before Jehovah.

Holding the golden censer, Zacharias stood alone within the Holy Place which was lighted only by the soft rays of the seven-branched golden candlestick. Before him hung the great veil of the temple concealing from view the Holy of Holies, wherein the Spirit of Jehovah was believed to dwell. At his left, on the north side of the room, was the table of sacred bread, or showbread, as it was called. In the center, not far from the great veil, stood the golden altar of incense, and, glowing upon it, a mass of live coals from the altar of sacrifice. Outside, the temple music, for the time being, had ceased. The priests and people had drawn back from the great altar, and, bowed in worship, awaited the cloud of smoke of burning incense that would carry their prayers upward before God.

Receiving at last the signal for which he waited, Zacharias approached the altar and scattered the incense upon the coals



They Found Mary and Joseph, and the Child Lying in a Manger

as near as possible to the Holy of Holies. He watched until the fragrant cloud began to rise, then he, too, would have worshiped and retired had not a strange sight caused him to stand still in great fear.

The Vision of Zacharias By the side of the altar stood a bright form which he knew to be a messenger from God. The messenger said: "Be not afraid, for God has heard your prayers, and you and Elisabeth shall have a son whose name shall be called John." The angel also said that this son would be a great prophet, and would lead many unto righteousness, and that he would prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Lord. These and other wonderful things he told concerning the child, but Zacharias could not believe them to be true. Then the angel said that, because of his unbelief, he should be dumb until the child should be born. From that hour until the birth of his son, Zacharias was unable to speak.

Six months after this God's messenger, whom the Bible calls Gabriel, was sent to the earth with another message. This time he came to Nazareth, to the home of a young girl, a cousin of Elisabeth, whose name was Mary. She was the promised wife of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, whom you will remember was a descendant of David, the great king. Mary was also a descendant of David, and a pure and virtuous young girl.

When the angel, whose name (Gabriel) means "the power of God," appeared to Mary, she, like Zacharias, was greatly troubled. But he said to her: "Hail, Mary, *"Hail, Mary, Beloved of God"* beloved of God! Be not afraid, for you have found favor in the sight of the Lord. You shall have a son and shall call his name Jesus." Now, the name "Jesus" means "Saviour," and the angel told Mary that this name should be given her son, because He would save the people from their sins. The angel also said that He should be called the Son of the Most High, and that

to Him would be given the throne of His father David, upon which He would reign forever. "Of his kingdom there would be no end."

Mary could not understand how these things could be, but the angel assured her that no word of God should be without power. He said: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you, and the child that shall be born to you shall be called the Son of God." The angel also told her of the son that was to be born to her aged cousin Elisabeth. When she heard this, Mary said: "Behold in me the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be unto me as you have said."

Soon after the visit of the angel Gabriel, Mary went to the home of her cousin Elisabeth, near Jerusalem. As soon as Mary spoke to her God caused Elisabeth to know what the angel had promised to Mary, and she expressed her great joy that she should be honored by a visit from the mother of her Lord. Mary remained with Elisabeth and Zacharias for about three months, or, perhaps, until the child that was to be called John was born. Then she returned to Nazareth, in Galilee, where she was married and dwelt with her husband, Joseph the carpenter.



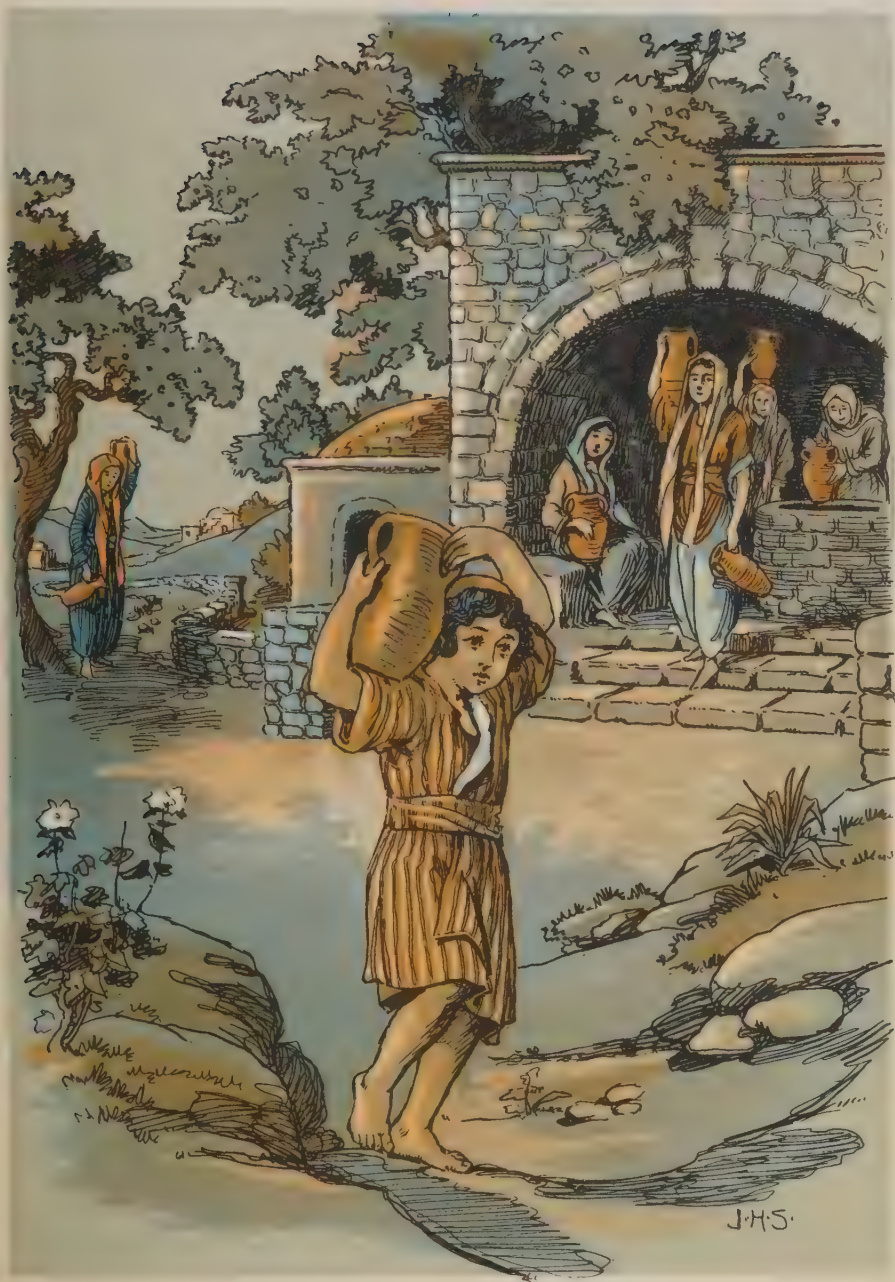
BETHLEHEM



AS we have learned, the Jews for a long time had not been rulers of their own land. These were wild and warlike days, and the march of successive conquerors had left the chosen people subject to one foreign master after another. No one of them was a good master, and just at this time they were under a people called the Romans.

The Romans were perhaps more considerate in their government of conquered races than was customary at that time. Apparently they desired only that the provinces, as the conquered countries were called, admit the authority of Rome and be prompt in the payment of taxes. So long as they did this they could govern themselves much as they chose. But with all their leniency the Romans were careful always that no native prince with the real interest of his people at heart should be in a position of power. To enforce this rule Roman soldiers occupied the strongholds of each foreign capital under their dominion.

The Jews had a king, but, needless to say, he was not a Jewish king. He was, however, related to them in blood and understood their religion and their laws, although he cared nothing for these things save as he could use them to further his own selfish ambition. His name was Herod, and he was the worst of many bad rulers of that time. The Jews hated him, but he was useful to the Romans because he knew how to govern this turbulent little province of Judea, which,



“And the Child Grew and Waxed Strong, and Advanced in Favor with God and Men”

from the beginning of their rule over it, had always given its conquerors endless trouble.

There had recently been changes at Rome. Cæsar Augustus had come to the head of Roman affairs, and his first act was to remake the old republic into an empire. As he had just had a long civil war upon his hands, the new Cæsar soon found himself in need of money. His next important step was to send out a decree that all the world should be taxed. To make sure that none should escape this taxation, or enrollment, he also decreed that a census should be taken in which the names of every man, woman and child in the empire should be recorded.

As we have seen, Rome was only interested in getting the money. The manner of taking this census was left to the local rulers. In Judea, Herod, with his knowledge of the ancient Jewish tribal divisions, sent out a decree that at a certain time, corresponding with our month of December, every man, woman and child among the Jews should present themselves in the ancestral home of their family, or tribe, for enrollment among the subjects of the great emperor. As Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, and his young bride, Mary, were descendants of David, they were compelled to make the long journey to Bethlehem, the old home of David and his people.

The Way to Bethlehem It is not difficult to imagine what a hardship this journey must have been. It would require three or four days, at best. And since the families of the different tribes scattered over all the country would be journeying at the same time, the narrow roads would be crowded and progress slow. Even a short journey at such a time would be hard and wearying.

Tired and travel-worn, Joseph and Mary at last reached Bethlehem. But so many were before them that the city was full of people. The inn, or khan, as it was called, where they had expected to stay for the night, was already crowded,

and there was no room. The night was cold, for it was winter. They would be grateful for any sort of shelter where they might keep warm. At last they found a place. Kindly people, in pity for the travel-weary young wife, made her a bed in a stable.

Here, in the lowliest of places, the Saviour, for whom mankind had been watching and waiting for thousands of years, was born. Not in a palace as His people had thought He would be, but in a cave-like stable. the home of oxen, sheep and goats, and when His mother had wrapped some clothes about Him she laid Him in a manger.

.

That night shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks on the hills overlooking the deep valley that runs eastward from Bethlehem. On these same hills the boy David *Like unto David* had tended his father's flocks in the days before he became the shepherd king of Israel. All around them were places of the most sacred interest to the Jewish people. Overhead the stars looked down. Perhaps no sound broke the stillness of the night save an occasional low bleat from one of the flock or the voice of a shepherd.

There is a tradition that these flocks belonged to the temple at Jerusalem. If that be true, then these were no ordinary shepherds, but servants of the temple entrusted with a sacred duty. But, be that as it may, the shepherds, like the rest of the Jewish people, knew that the time which the prophets had foretold, the time when the Messiah should be born, was at hand. It may be that they were thinking of Him and talking about Him to one another. For all Jews, from the highest to the lowest, had great hopes that when the Messiah should come all things that seemed to have gone wrong would be made right.

Then suddenly, before the staring eyes of the shepherds, the sky seemed to open. A bright light shone about them, and,

in glowing radiance, the figure of a messenger of God stood over them and the glory of the Lord shone around about them. They cried out in the terror of a deep fear, but the messenger said: "Be not afraid, for lo, I bring to you glad tidings of a great joy that shall be for all people. There *The Vision of* has been born unto you this day, in the city of *the Shepherds* David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is a sign by which you shall know Him. You shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger."

When the messenger had said this, suddenly there came to be among them a great throng of other angel messengers, all singing and praising God, and this is what they sang:

"Glory unto God in the highest,
On earth peace, good will toward men."

Then, as quickly as they had come, the angelic choir disappeared. The strange light ceased to glow, and where all the radiant glory had shone the shepherds saw only the sky and stars and their flocks feeding or resting as before, under the light of the moon.

Coming to themselves after a time, the shepherds began saying to one another: "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, and which the Lord has made known to us." They came with haste; over the terraced hill, through the gardens of Bethlehem, they hurried *"Even to* to the top of the ridge upon which the little town *Bethlehem"* was built. Here stood the inn, or khan, where Mary and Joseph had applied for rest for the night, but could not enter because it was already full. In a stable near by they found them, and in the manger, on the hay or straw intended for the animals, lay the newborn babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, as the messenger of the Lord had told them they would find Him.

The shepherds were filled with joy, for the Christ they had so longed for had come at last. Happily they told Joseph and Mary what they had seen out in the fields as they guarded their flocks. Mary was pleased when she learned from the shepherds how they had come to know of the birth of her babe, and treasured this and other wonderful things concerning Him in her heart. The shepherds went out and told every one they met about the child and what the angel of the Lord had said. Then they returned to the care of their flocks, praising God and thanking Him for what He had revealed to them.

The news of the birth of the child and the words of the angel messenger soon spread. Those who heard it began to hope that the day of deliverance of Israel was at hand. They

The Throne believed that Jesus would be a great earthly king
of David and sit upon the throne of David in Jerusalem,
and rule not alone Judea, but all the rest of the
world besides. Had not their prophets said that

His name should be called "Wonderful," and "Mighty Counselor," that the government should be upon His shoulder, and that the nations should bow before Him? So, perhaps, we should not blame them overmuch for believing the time to be at hand when the Jews would march with streaming banners to the conquest of the world. That was the only kind of a king they knew about, nor could they conceive of any other.

But the prophets had also said things about the Messiah that could not mean that He was to be just an earthly king. They had said that He should be called "The Prince of Peace," and that His kingdom would endure forever. Surely that must have meant that Jesus was to be more than a mere ruler of the affairs of men. But the Jews of that time could not understand how this could be. Perhaps because His life as a child among them was apparently the same as that of other Jewish boys, they could not think of Him as essentially dif-

ferent from them. The New Testament says that the child Jesus "grew and waxed strong, and advanced in favor with God and men." The people of that day who knew Jesus must have seen and observed this. But the memories of the people are short-lived, and as many years passed before Jesus took up His work those who knew and rejoiced at His birth had, it seemed, forgotten Him.

But the position of Jesus in the world does not depend upon the memories or beliefs of these ancient Jews. The things He taught to men have enabled them to see clearly why He could not have been the kind of king the Jews expected Him to be. The passing centuries since He was on earth have served to prove that the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him were true, for assuredly no earthly monarch has ever established a kingdom so mighty or one that has endured or shall endure like that of the Prince of peace.

This Book—

Is Book I. of a series of two books on the life of JESUS. Book II. takes up the story of Jesus' childhood and ministry, His death and resurrection. The books are uniform in general appearance and character with the former series published under the title of **Bible Hero Stories** and including stories of JOSEPH, MOSES, DAVID, PAUL. Order from any religious bookseller.

Library of the
Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

No. Class

Ex Dono. *Rev. Chas. Hitchcock*

Date. *June 1933.*



GTU LIBRARY



3 2400 00572 2230

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500
All items are subject to recall.

